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E.O. 11652; GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. SYRIA AND THE USSR: COOPERATION OR CO-EXISTENCE?

DESPITE THE SPATE OF HIGH LEVEL SYRIAN-SOVIET EXCHANGES SINCE ASAD'S OCTOBER VISIT AND THE PUBLIC EMPHASIS ON COOPERATION IN BILATERAL PROGRAMS, EMBASSY DAMASCUS BELIEVES THAT SOME IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES REMAIN UNRESOLVED. THE SYRIANS ARE CONCERNED OVER:

--THE SOVIET MILITARY'S RELUCTANCE TO RELINQUISH CONTROL OVER CERTAIN WEAPON SYSTEMS, AND A REPORTED 47 PERCENT INCREASE IN NEW WEAPONS PRICES;

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--MOSCOW'S FAILURE TO CONSULT PRIOR TO CALLING FOR RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE;

--THEIR LACK OF SUCCESS IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH IRAQ (AFTER REPORTEDLY ASKING THE SOVIETS FOR HELP).

FOR THEIR PART, THE SOVIETS MUST BE SOMEWHAT DISCOMFITED BY DAMASCUS' REPORTED SHOPPING IN THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH ARMS MARKETS AND THE STRENGTHENING OF SYRIAN-WEST EUROPEAN TRADE TIES. (CONFIDENTIAL) DAMASCUS 4991, 12/15.)

2. SAHARA: MAURITANIA STANDS FAST

WHILE NOUAKCHOTT REMAINED TENSE DECEMBER 15, MAURITANIAN AND MOROCCAN MILITARY FORCES NEAR THE SAHARAN BORDER REFRAINED FROM ATTACKING POLISARIO-ALGERIAN CONTROLLED LA GUERA TO AVOID EXCESSIVE CIVILIAN LOSS OF LIFE.

MEANWHILE, THE ANTI-MOROCCAN PROPAGANDA DRUMS CONTINUE TO BEAT IN ALGIERS, ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY, WITH THE BOUMEDIENE REGIME AS COMMITTED AS EVER TO KEEPING THE SAHARA FIRES BURNING. (CONFIDENTIAL) NOUAKCHOTT 2562 AND (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) ALGIERS 3583, 12/15.)

3. PORTUGAL: POLITICAL JOCKEYING CONTINUES

ACCORDING TO A POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD) SOURCE, A PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE THE PPD, SOCIALIST, AND COMMUNIST SECRETARIES-GENERAL IN THE AZEVEDO CABINET HAS BEEN REJECTED BECAUSE OF THE UNFAVORABLE IMPACT THAT CUNHAL'S PRESENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE ON THE WEST. MEANWHILE:

--THE PPD HAS PROPOSED 15 MEN TO REPLACE THE CABINET MINISTERS WHO RECENTLY LEFT THE PARTY AND, CONCERNED OVER FURTHER DEFECTIONS, MAY SEEK TO RECONCILE ITS DISSIDENT RADICALS WITH THE MORE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS.

--DISARRAY AND SOUL-SEARCHING CONTINUE ON THE LEFT AMID SIGNS--SUCH AS LAST WEEK'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC
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(PDC) CONGRESS--OF RESURGENCE ON THE RIGHT. (CONFIDENTIAL) LISBON 7449, 12/15.)

4. OAU SUMMIT: MODERATES WORK TOWARD CONCILIATION

EMBASSY ADDIS ABABA REPORTED DECEMBER 15 THAT MODERATE OAU AMBASSADORS FROM THE IVORY COAST, EGYPT, GHANA, AND THE SUDAN ARE WORKING HARD TO ENLIST SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOS-

TION THAT THE ANGOLA SUMMIT SHOULD AVOID GIVING THE STAMP OF APPROVAL TO ANY ANGOLAN FACTION (I.E. MPLA). THEY HOPE, RATHER, THAT THE SUMMIT WILL CONCENTRATE ON A CEASEFIRE, WITH TALKS AND, ULTIMATELY, A COALITION GOVERNMENT TO FOLLOW. IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

--MOST OAU AMBASSADORS NOW BELIEVE THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND SUMMIT MEETINGS MAY IN FACT TAKE PLACE "BACK TO BACK" FROM JANUARY 8 TO 12.

--THE CAMEROONIAN AMBASSADOR TRAVELED TO MOZAMBIQUE LAST WEEK TO URGE, APPARENTLY UNSUCCESSFULLY, MODERATION ON SAMORA MACHEL.

--MANY EXPECT NYERERE'S AND MACHEL'S REPORTED ALLEGATION THAT AMIN "CONSPIRED WITH MOBUTU" TO PREVENT THE SUMMIT WILL BE AIRED AT THE CONFERENCE, AND THAT AMIN'S OAU LEADERSHIP WILL BE CENSURED.

--PRESIDENTS KAUNDA AND KENYATTA CALLED FOR A CEASE-FIRE AND POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS IN ANGOLA. (CONFIDENTIAL) ADDIS ABABA 14479 AND (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) NAIROBI 10785, 12/15.)

5. LEBANON'S FIRE SLOWING, NOT CEASING

SPORADIC GUNFIRE WAS STILL BEING REPORTED THE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 15 IN BEIRUT'S HOTLY CONTESTED HOTEL DISTRICT. MEANWHILE, JUMBLATT'S DEPARTURE FOR DAMASCUS IS FUELING ALREADY WIDESPREAD RUMORS THAT KHADDAM WILL RETURN TO BEIRUT SHORTLY TO RESUME MEDIATION. (CONFIDENTIAL) BEIRUT 15202, 12/15.) INGERSOLL

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